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ABSTRACT

First (L1) and second language (L2) composing studies have documented similarities between skilled and unskilled native L1 writers and L2 writers. To date, there have been very few investigations on how bilingual writers attend to audience when composing in two languages. This study reports how four bilingual writers attended to audience in persuasive writing in Malay and English and how their process skills compared to the quality of their written products. Findings suggest that the bilingual writers' strategies remained constant across languages, yet differed according to whether they were skilled or less skilled writers in general. Theoretical and educational implications resulting from the study are discussed. (Contains 50 references.) (Author/SM)

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Bilingual writers' awareness of audience in L1 and L2 persuasive writing

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ABSTRACT

First and second language composing studies have documented similarities between skilled and unskilled native L1 writers and L2 writers. To date, there have been very few investigations on how bilingual writers attend to audience when composing in two languages. This study reports how four bilingual writers attended to audience in persuasive writing in Malay and English and how their process skills compared to the quality of their written products. Findings suggest that the bilingual writers' strategies remained constant across languages, yet differed according to whether they were skilled or less skilled writers in general. Theoretical and educational implications resulting from the study are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Writing teachers of second language (L2) students, especially those who have attempted to become writers themselves in an additional language, know the types of challenges a writer faces when composing in the L2. One obvious challenge would be the L2 writers' relative lack of proficiency in English (Arndt, 1987; Cumming, 1989; Eldesky, 1986; Raimes, 1987; Jones and Tetroe, 1987). A second challenge would entail differences in implicit frames or culturally-driven assumptions about academic writing in the first language (L1) that may not transfer straightforwardly to academic writing in English (Connor, 2002; Dyc, 2002; Hinds, 1987; Leki, 1997; Ramanathan and Kaplan, 1996). Another challenge would be composing and processing demands that constrain the L2 writing performance (Arndt, 1987; Brooks, 1985; Jones, 1982; Raimes, 1985, 1987; Silva, 1993; Zamel, 1982, 1983). While L2 writers face these and other constraints, L1 literacy also exercises positive influences on L2 writing. One widely accepted claim is that literacy development in L1 shares a common underlying proficiency with literacy in the L2 (Cummins, 1981). It has been recognized that L2 learners have educational, cultural, and linguistic experiences that may facilitate transfer of skills to second language learning and that these experiences may allow them to view issues from multiple perspectives, an important aspect of critical literacy.

While many studies have compared L1 and L2 writers, few have looked at how bilingual writers compose in two languages and how audience consideration affects cross-linguistic composing

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processes. Equally important, many composing L1 and L2 studies have involved ESL learners from a variety of language backgrounds, with Arabic (Ostler, 1987), Chinese (Arndt, 1987; Pennington & So, 1993), Japanese (Carson, 1990), Navajo (Dyc, 2002) as the first languages. But few have looked at how Malay[1] bilingual writers compose texts in their native language and English and how contextual factors such as audience and task affect their writing performance across languages. Furthermore, given that some contrastive rhetoricians have posited a distinctly Asian rhetorical tradition that differs from English rhetoric in significant ways, such as audience awareness, a study which examines the composing processes of Asian Malay bilingual writers is particularly warranted. Specifically, the study investigates the following questions:

1. Do bilingual writers differ in their levels of audience awareness in L1 and L2 writing due to differing developmental levels or cultural influences?

2. To what extent does audience awareness relate to the overall writing quality in L1 and L2?

BACKGROUND

Composing Processes

L2 composing studies (Jones, 1982; Raimes, 1985, 1987; Krapels, 1990; Zamel, 1983) have noted differences between expert and novice writers and general composing processes that are generally similar in L1 composing (Perl, 1979; Sommer, 1980; Bereiter, 1990; Brown & Palinscar, 1989; Flower, 1979). These studies suggest that proficient writers have effective writing strategies for generating and evaluating text to meet their rhetorically constrained goals. As for novice writers, many of their problems appear to stem from applying inefficient writing strategies to carry out their goals in writing. They tend to have less flexible composing strategies, are more bound to their texts at the expense of ideas, and therefore tend to make surface level revisions involving grammar (Dennett, 1990; Hall 1990) than mechanics such as spelling (Hall, 1990). Meanwhile, L2 composing studies have also highlighted salient differences between the subprocesses of L1 and L2 writing. L2 writers did less planning at the global and local level (Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Raimes, 1985, 1987), and did less reflection (Hall, 1990) and less intuitive reviewing than L1 writers, indicating L2 writing is much more difficult and more constrained than in L1 (Silva 1993). Hence, composing competence is a necessary skill in writing performance although linguistic ability can dramatically improve L1 and L2 writing performance.

Other composing studies have also suggested that a lack of composing competence and L2 linguistic ability could interfere with the L2 writing performance (Arndt, 1987; Cumming, 1989; Eldesky, 1986; Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Pennington & So, 1993; Raimes, 1985, 1987). Arndt's (1987) proficient Chinese ESL writers showed similar strategies for writing across languages but they differed as a group in their degree of planning, revising, and writing. While expert writers showed efficient use of strategies in both L1 and L2 composing, novice writers manifested overzealous adherence to their plans and focused on making word-level changes instead of evaluating how successfully they have fulfilled their purpose for writing. Arndt further suggests that all L2 writers must be able to attend to both rhetorical and linguistic features to write well, a finding that is consistent with the studies of Raimes' (1985, 1987) non-remedial writers who did more revision than the remedial writers. In sum, these studies underscore several important findings: 1) language proficiency and writing strategies are conditions for writing well in any language, and 2) the L1 writing proficiency may have a positive influence on L2 writing, and is not necessarily a negative source of interference (Krapels, 1990).

Audience and Purpose

There is a strong consensus in composition studies on the importance of social contexts and cognitive efforts of the writer in understanding writing development (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Black, 1989; Bonk, 1990; Flower, 1994; Nystrand, 1989; Rubin, 1984). Over the past two decades, considerable interest has been directed at the issue of audience as a major "social-context" factor influencing writing performance. Nystrand (1989) notes that competent writers don't merely "will" a text on readers; rather, they mold their text by balancing their intentions and purposes with the expectations and needs of the reader (p. 75). A skilled writer understands the importance of addressing their audience interests, knowledge, values, and rhetorical expectations for writing and addresses these concerns in all phases of composing. Furthermore, Flower (1994) and Flower, Stein, Ackerman, Kantz, McCormick & Peck (1990) argue that good writers consider many aspects of their rhetorical problem (e.g. audience, topic, task complexity, the writer's goals, the writer's persona) and devise appropriate goal formation strategies to solve their rhetorical problem whereas less skilled writers do not have this strategic knowledge for determining appropriate writing goals and carrying out these goals through the writing process. This problem-solving process parallels Scardamalia and Bereiter's (1987) "knowledge-transforming" and "knowledge-telling" distinction between expert and novice writers. Simply put, expert writers have efficient

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"knowledge-transforming" processes that enable them to resolve writing task difficulties through a dialectical process of reflection that leads to problem analysis and goal setting. In contrast, novice writers focus more on retrieving and conveying information as a strategy for making the task manageable. Writers may not be able to transfer their skillful performance to new writing tasks unless they have had practice in resolving complex writing problems.

Although audience awareness is fundamentally related to good writing, the concept of audience remains elusive. One perspective states that the audience is invoked for a rhetorical purpose and does not represent a "real audience" (Long, 1990; Park, 1982), suggesting that audience exists in relation to the discourse situation. In other words, writers create a persona that the reader should take on during reading. Another perspective states that audience is represented when readers and writers are opposed (Kirsch, 1990; Hays, Brandt & Chantry, 1988) or evolves in relation to the discourse context and the writer's goals (Park, 1982). Writing will also vary according to the extent to which the writers and readers share special knowledge of topics (Lemke, 1995).

While audience awareness is recognized as an important element of good writing, contrastive rhetoric studies (Dyc, 2002; Hinds, 1987; Scollon & Scollon, 1981) have suggested that the notion of audience is culturally-based and as a result, elements of English discourse may be problematic for bilingual students to acquire. Further, Atkinson (1997), Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996), and Carson (1992) suggest that certain Asian educational systems may be culturally at odds with a system based on Western traditions of thought and rhetoric and that cultural differences in values and assumptions can manifest themselves in the rhetorical patterns in different Asian languages and educational systems as a whole. The Malaysian culture, which is firmly rooted in pan-Asian traditions, could potentially have an impact on the amount and types of audience-related strategies selected by Malaysian bilingual writers. One potential cultural difference in writing would be a sense of audience awareness which may not be emphasized in educational systems that assume a relatively stable, single audience that shares the same cultural values of the writer, such as the teacher or dominant culture, or assumes readers to infer the writer's meaning. Because English rhetoric assumes that writers are responsible for communicating their purpose clearly and presenting relevant information for readers to appreciate different perspectives, L2 writers may have to grapple with learning, or being apprenticed into, a new discourse community in addition to learning English as an additional language (Atkinson, 1997; Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996).

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Kubota (1999), while conceding that cultural differences do in fact exist, suggests that Asian educational systems have more similarities with systems found in North America than some contrastive rhetoricians suggest and that rigidly categorizing how an entire culture expresses itself through writing has the potential for stereotyping other cultures. The arguments against simplistic categorization is especially crucial in L2 studies since Zamel (1997) and Spack (1997) have pointed out that L2 writers, like L1 writers, are diverse in terms of linguistic ability, composing levels, and writing experiences. Connor (2002) also points out that although writing is impacted by culture in interesting and complex ways, writing is also influenced by such variables as "L1 educational experiences and mismatched expectations between readers and writers" (p.504). The question of whether there is any cultural impact on the types and amounts of audience-related strategies employed by bilingual writers in both the home and additional language, and whether culture impacts skilled and less skilled writers equally is worth investigating.

This study investigates the extent to which bilingual Malaysian writers address audience in Malay and English persuasive writing and whether audience-related strategies reflect cultural influences or differing developmental levels of writing proficiency. It also examines how composing processes relate to writing quality. Because many previous studies on L2 and awareness of audience and potential cultural influences on such awareness have focused primarily on the written product, a research study which focuses on both composing processes and written products in two languages is warranted.

METHOD

Sample

Four female bilingual Malaysians enrolled in a special program at a large American university took part in this study voluntarily. They were native speakers of Malay and proficient in English due to exposure to English through formal schooling from K-11 in Malaysia. Additionally, all four participants were completing their 12th grade at a community high school and taking college-level preparatory courses on critical literacy and academic writing in the evening. The students were given the pseudonyms of Sara, Nik, Ana, and Mona respectively. All four bilingual writers had obtained top scores on the essay-based Malay language high school exit exam in Malaysia. However, they differed in their English proficiency as measured by two language proficiency tests commonly used for international students seeking entrance to U.S. tertiary institutions: the essay-based

Test of Written English (TWE) and reading/language Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL). Sara and Ana scored 6 (the highest score) on the TWE and 650-700 on the TOEFL and thus, were designated as having advanced levels of English proficiency. Nik and Mona scored 4.5 and 5 on the TWE and 550-575 on the TOEFL respectively and were designated as having high intermediate levels of English proficiency. These designations were confirmed by their writing instructors who had taught them for two semesters.

Procedures

This study utilizes a variety of data such as audio taped think-aloud and interview protocols to capture writer awareness of audience during the writing process. Participants were first trained on how to do a think-aloud while writing and revising. They were encouraged to use Malay, English or to code-switch between the two in order to promote as much verbalizing of thoughts as possible in the think-aloud. Revision think-aloud data for the Malay and English writing tasks were collected because it afforded additional data on the writers' consideration for audience that may have been neglected during the drafting stage because they had to juggle other composing constraints. After revising their final drafts in Malay and English, they were interviewed individually about their writing process to gather more information about how they had used audience knowledge in shaping content and style of writing, their writing constraints, and their accomplishment of writing purpose. These interviews were conducted a few days after the writers revised their Malay and English drafts.

At the end of the study, participants completed a questionnaire to elicit data on their previous school writing experiences in English and Malay. The data were also analyzed to determine the extent to which previous training and experiences in writing might have influenced the writers' use of audience in writing persuasive texts in Malay and English. The analysis of the data was triangulated between the researchers, the bilingual participants, and another bilingual essay rater, a Malaysian university instructor who was a Malay-English bilingual.

Think-aloud data from the drafting and revising sessions and interview protocols were analyzed to examine the frequency of writers' audience attention when composing in two languages. Each think-aloud statement in the protocol was analyzed using an audience analysis coding scheme adapted from Fontaine (1989) and Berkenkotter (1981). Each think-aloud statement could be a phrase, a sentence, or a set of sentences which represented an instance where writers had made references to their audience when

they were thinking about a single idea. The scheme captures different types of audience-adaptive strategies that writers use when composing. Interview protocols provided additional information about the writers' audience accommodation.

Using an adapted version of the Indiana Performance Assessment of Writing rubric which was used in statewide writing assessment, two bilingual raters holistically scored the written products independently. The scoring rubric was used for both the English and Malay writing tasks after it was determined by the Malay-English bilingual university instructors that the criteria included in the rubric were similar to the used to assess Malay advanced writing at a large Malay-medium university in Malaysia. In this study, the raters reached over 90% agreement on scoring both language tasks. The two raters agreed before hand to use increments of a half level if they felt the writer was between two levels (i.e. a 2.5 for writer between levels 2 and 3). The essays were graded based on two writing dimensions: 1) the ability of the writer to state a clear position supported by appropriate and adequate reasons and to explain concepts clearly while taking a position and 2) the ability of the writer to present ideas coherently, use clear, reflective words, and demonstrate control of mechanics and a variety of syntactic structures. Each essay was given a separate score from a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (the highest) for the accomplishment of the two writing dimensions. These scores were used to establish the relationship between audience-adapted strategies and overall persuasiveness.

Writing Task

Each student was assigned to write an argumentative essay in Malay and English on culturally familiar topics. An argumentative essay format was selected because it entails a stronger focus on audience than the narrative (Berkenkotter, 1980; Langer, 1986) or expository writing. In each essay, the writers addressed a familiar audience of their high school peers or their undergraduate class to see how audience knowledge influences their approaches to writing. To minimize translation of one essay into another, different topics were provided for the Malay and English essays. Writers were given the chance to revise their drafts. The design of the study is shown in Table 1:

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Table 1
Order of Language and Writing Topics

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 7
WRITERS	Sara/Nik	Sara/Nik	Sara/Nik	Sara/Nik	Post-Writing Interview & Questionnaire
DRAFT	1	2	1	2	
LANGUAGE	English	English	Malay	Malay	
TOPIC	A	A	B	B	
WRITERS	Ana/Mona	Ana/Mona	Ana/Mona	Ana/Mona	Post-Writing Interview & Questionnaire
DRAFT	1	2	1	2	
LANGUAGE	Malay	Malay	English	English	
TOPIC	A	A	B	B	

Topic A required the writers to persuade their undergraduate classmates why their ideal classroom was either American, Malaysian, or a combination of both. Topic B required them to convince their high school peers, including their Malaysian ones, why an aspect of their Malaysian culture should be retained or should not be retained or modified to some degree. The writing prompts were deemed arguable by one of the researchers and the Malaysian bilingual educators who were both products of the Malaysian K-12 system and former Malaysian university instructors. This addressed a concern of Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996) that ESL students should have access to appropriate cultural frames in order to be aware that "a strong argument deals with an issue that divides an audience" (p. 26). After revising their originals drafts for topic A, the students wrote on topic B. Ultimately, all four writers in this study composed two drafts of Malay and English argumentative essays on two culturally familiar topics for two different audiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Audience awareness, composing skills, and cultural influences

The first research question asked whether there is a difference in audience attention when writers wrote in Malay and English and whether these differences are attributed to differences in developmental writing levels or cultural influences. Table 2 displays the frequencies of various types of audience-related strategies found in the think-aloud and interview protocols when the bilingual writers composed and revised in Malay and English respectively. To facilitate comparison between process skills and product in this study, writers who exhibited frequent use of effective audience strategies and the ability to handle writing constraints to meet rhetorical goals (which will be discussed later in this section) were designated as skilled writers in terms of process skills, whereas those who showed fewer use of effective audience strategies and were less able to handle writing constraints were designated less skilled writers. Specifically, Sara exhibited 15 audience-related strategies in Malay and 30 in English whereas Ana had 18 in both language tasks and hence, were designated as skilled writers. In contrast, Nik employed 1 audience-related strategy in Malay and 3 in English while Mona had 1 in Malay and 2 in English. Because they employed a strikingly lower number of audience-related strategies, they were designated as less skilled writers.

Table 2 suggests that the writers' strategies remained constant across languages, but they differed in their strategies as a group in terms of their analysis of audience traits, evaluation of audience response, and revision with audience in mind. The data also suggests that writing in the L1 or L2 first did not influence the way the writers paid attention to their audience. In fact, all writers exhibited similar types of audience strategies, or lack thereof, despite the order of language tasks. In addition, the difference in number of audience-related strategies between the two skilled writers who exhibited the highest number of audience-related strategies indicates the heterogeneity of L2 writers even within the cultural group as suggested by Zamel (1997) and Spack (1997). The differences between the skilled and unskilled bilingual writers also suggest differences in developmental writing levels; thus, they do not necessarily compose as a monolithic cultural group.

Table 2
Frequency of audience-related strategies for the Malay & English persuasive writing tasks

Audience-Related Strategies	Skilled writers				Less skilled writers			
	Sara		Ana		Nik		Mona	
	L1	L2	L1	L2	L1	L2	L1	L2
Analyzes and constructs audience								
identifies self with audience or audience with self	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
constructs audience characteristics	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-
creates rhetorical context in oral protocol	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
considers facts about audience	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	-
Sets goals/plans for audience								
generates audience-related goals	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
generates sub-goals or refinements of plans	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	-
consolidates several sub-goals to carry out plan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Evaluates audience response								
decides to review or improve text keeping audience in mind	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
evaluates content based on anticipated audience response	2	6	3	4	-	-	-	-
evaluates style based on anticipated audience response	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revises for audience								
makes major changes in text already written, with audience in mind	3	6	3	2	-	-	-	-
makes minor changes in text already written, with audience in mind	2	5	3	3	-	1	-	-
Miscellaneous strategies								
addresses researcher as audience	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
reminds oneself to keep audience in mind	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
directly addresses audience in task prompt	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
TOTAL NUMBER	15	30	18	18	1	3	1	2

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Further analysis of the think-aloud and interview data revealed that the writers' differences in audience awareness for Malay and English persuasive tasks were found to be related to these interrelated factors: 1) the writers' ability to construct an image of their audience potential traits, 2) the writers' task perception, which in turn, affected their willingness and/or ability to question and reevaluate personal opinions and knowledge with respect to audience perspectives. This data will then be compared to the product result to establish if composing competence was an influential factor in measuring persuasive writing performance.

Audience conceptions of skilled writers

This study found that skilled writers' degree of audience awareness was tied to specific, invoked audience characteristics that were closely linked to their rhetorical goal. Data suggested that skilled writers perceived an evolving audience, from a neutral to a potentially adversarial one. Skilled writers also used their knowledge of audience traits to evaluate what background information should be included or excluded so as to establish a shared perspective between themselves and the readers. They also knew how to apply their inferences about audience in evaluating the effectiveness of their arguments. For example, Sara invoked audience characteristics when composing in English than in Malay. In the English persuasive task, Sara envisioned a group of neutral American undergraduates in her first draft. However, as she revised and reevaluated her written arguments, her representation of audience changed into a potentially adversarial audience who may not have shared her views. To appeal to her evolving audience, she revised her text by justifying her partiality to American classrooms that resulted from having been exposed to both Malaysian and American classrooms. Her motivation to align the readers' position to hers was reflected in her protocols:

> "I'm mentioning the name of my high school here in Bloomington...because it's ...concrete evidence to Americans that I did go to school here for a year."

Sara also frequently used audience knowledge to evaluate the strength of her argument, which helped her decide what information should be included or excluded. For example, in an earlier draft of her essay, she thought the issue of school uniforms was salient to her discussion, arguing that school uniforms were uncomfortable and did not add to the learning experience. In revising her text, she decided that this issue would be largely irrelevant to her audience and that specific reasons that make an ideal classroom should center on the

learning environment itself and not on school uniforms that her own American high school and university did not require. Her decision to exclude this particular point was evident in her protocol:

> "When I changed the way I raised my point in the revision, it's because I was thinking about the audience. What would make more of an impact? Is it dress code or giving choices to students to take whatever classes they want?"

Sara's effort to evaluate the strength of her arguments was evident throughout her composing process. Realizing the lack of a logically sound reason for her argument regarding elective classes, Sara further reasoned that elective classes were advantageous because it offered students the chance to make personal choices about their classes, which could stimulate "some interest in that participant". She explained that "each student has different strengths and weaknesses and plans for the future" and "the ability to choose one's classes early would help students to plan their college education."

Although fewer in number when composing in English, Sara still showed more audience-related strategies than less skilled writers when composing in Malay on why an aspect of Malaysian culture should or should not be retained for an audience that constituted American and Malaysian peers. In this case, the writer invoked an image of a sympathetic audience who would appreciate multicultural perspectives because "they will be more understanding towards your [the writer's] situation [position]." Her focus on aligning her ideas in light of her audience was echoed in her protocol:

> "it is not important that these [cultural] aspects are different or the same as long as we recognize ...the importance of appreciating the differences. Hope this will bring the two countries together...I was hoping that they would understand that having similar or different cultural practices can make us interact better. I was hoping to get the emotion out of this audience."

Sara's greater use of audience-related strategies in English may be due to her sensitivity to audience after having spent almost a year in an American high school, an artifact of her becoming more of an English dominant bilingual.

Unlike Sara, the other skilled writer, Ana, showed no difference in audience-related strategies when writing in Malay and English. In fact, she exhibited similar strategies for thinking about audience and using this knowledge in writing across languages. In both language tasks, the writer addressed a

wider audience than the one assigned (i.e. American and Malaysian high school peers) and inferred her evolving audience's personalities and attitudes while composing her drafts. For example, although the writer wrote the first draft of the English essay for the benefit of convincing Malaysian readers to become more time conscious and punctual, she realized that the prompt required her to address her American readers, which was reflected in the think-aloud of her initial draft:

> "I'm not saying that Americans prevent themselves from making appointments with Malaysians. To be on the safe side, when you [Americans] set the time, confirm whether it is Malaysian or American time."

In reevaluating her ideas with the American audience in mind, she felt that some of Malaysian readers might be offended by her negative overtones and negative perceptions about Malaysians. Subsequently, Ana softened her tone to accommodate the Malaysian and American readers, as reflected in the revision protocol:

> "Nevertheless, I'm not saying that Malaysians are slow. If each and every one of us is alike, our country [Malaysia] could be in chaos right now. Still there exists people who are fond of practicing Malaysian timing and it only takes one of them to give a bad name to all Malaysians. I strongly feel that Malaysian should change and I guess we are gradually."

Similarly, Ana approached her Malay persuasive tasks by invoking specific characteristics of her Malaysian and American audience that she hoped for in her readers. For this essay, she had a dual purpose and audience in mind: 1) to make her American readers aware of how much better American classrooms were compared to their Malaysia counterparts and also 2) to convince Malaysians about the elements of effective classrooms. To achieve her rhetorical goals, she compared both systems and gave vivid examples based on her experience in both American and Malaysian classrooms. The writer's initial view of a receptive audience who would agree with her position changed while she revised her draft, as suggested in this protocol:

> "Because I don't want my reader to have this impression that... I was condemning my previous experience in my old school and praising my new experience here only... Both has its own uniqueness... it's not only the American way is the best way...sometimes it has to be a balance between those two... the part where you respect teachers is what's lacking in American classroom...like treating you teachers as your pal are not so good."

One striking cultural influence in Ana's consideration for audience which had impacted her writing is her concern for saving the "face" of her potential readers while trying to remain objective in her arguments. This is not surprising considering that 'face-saving" is deeply embedded in the Malaysian cultural communication patterns and is expressed in Malay as *air muka* or "water face" and that one should not drop the "water face" of others. As seen in the preceding think-aloud protocol, Ana's effort to remain critical and fair to her fellow Malaysians led her to make two additional points that praised Malaysian teachers for their knowledge base and their ability to maintain a respectful teacher-student interaction. The skilled writer also elaborated on the advantages of having a culturally diverse classroom such as that found in her American high school and her previous classrooms in Malaysia because this would be positive element with which her cross-cultural audience could identify. In short, Ana did not always accommodate a uniform audience and was not bound to her original plan, as she reevaluated her strategy for accomplishing her rhetorical goals. While her general approach is consistent with Flower's (1979) "writer responsible" orientation adopted in writing in English, Ana also exhibited a traditional Malaysian concern for audience that may not be considered in English writing—the importance of protecting the readers' "face" by avoiding a face-threatening rhetorical move (Kong, 1998, cited in Connor 2002) when composing her Malay essay to a potential Malay audience.

Audience conceptions of less skilled writers

Unlike Sara and Ana, the less skilled Nik and Mona used less audience strategies when composing in Malay and English. Although Nik perceived that the audience for the Malay and English essays to be Malaysian peers and foreign students who may not have shared similar experiences and opinions, the writer felt no need to consider her audience when composing. She reasoned that her readers would maintain their position even if her arguments presented to them prevailed over their own arguments. Her assumptions about audience were reflected in the revised introduction of her English essay:

> "The definition of ideal classroom may differ from each person to the other, as well as different places and backgrounds. To me, an ideal classroom is a combination of several factors. If these factors are balanced, any classroom can reach the level of an ideal classroom."

Similarly, Mona paid little attention to audience. In both language tasks, the writer ignored the assigned audience and

instead perceived herself and one of the researchers as the main audience, as echoed in her English protocol:

> I mostly wrote for myself because I want to see satisfaction from it. I know you [the researcher] are going to read it but I'm not really sure if other people are going to read it, so I wrote for myself and you."

Even though Mona perceived an external audience outside herself, she did little to intuit or understand the external audience's (researcher) frame of reference; possibly because she assumed that the reader was a member of, and an authority in, of her cultural group. Her goal was primarily to retrieve and generate as many content information as possible and hence focused on "knowledge telling" (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1987) and consequently, made little attempt to present relevant information expected by the raters. In fact, both Nik and Mona may have assumed the knowledgeable teacher was the sole audience of their writing and thus placed the responsibility on the reader to make inferences about what they wrote. Therefore, displaying as much content, and not intuiting the characteristics of the audience posed in the writing prompt, was their priority.

Comparisons of task perceptions between skilled and less skilled writers

The audience awareness of all four bilingual writers is linked to task perception. Skilled writers perceived that they needed to persuade their readers to understand their position and thereby made many attempts to intuit their readers' characteristics to better understand their readers' frame of reference in both language tasks. Sara and Ana considered both pros and cons of their American and Malaysian experiences to make their audience understand their reasons for their views on the ideal classroom and on what specific Malaysian cultural practices and beliefs must or must not be retained. By invoking specific realities about their assumed audience and strategically evaluating their own arguments against their perceived reader traits and needs, they were able to balance and negotiate their writing purpose and the audience needs.

Less skilled Nik and Mona represented their writing task as an act of exploring and conveying their inner feelings and thoughts to the reader. They were writing more for themselves than for the external reader, and hence, did not evaluate audience traits and reactions to their ideas. Although Nik considered facts about her audience in the English task, she did not accommodate her audience in composing, as evident in her remarks during the post-writing interview: "The reader may

disagree with her [the writer] but to a certain point and sometimes we [the readers] have to review the arguments and agree with the writer." A similar attitude was also noted when the writer was composing in Malay:

> "When we write a persuasive essay, we must have our own stand. The readers cannot simply disagree with what the writer writes or prematurely say the writers' points are good. If the arguments are very strong, then the readers may accept them. But that doesn't mean that the readers will necessarily agree with all that was said."

Consequently, her lack of audience accommodation was evident in her Malay essay. Nik's essays were mostly descriptive in nature and lack adequate explanation. She did not provide the necessary background information in her Malay essay for cultural expressions such as *tahyul* (supernatural beings) so that a reader unfamiliar with Malaysian culture could fully understand. Nik also did not adequately explain her philosophical stance on why these institutionalized superstitions should not be retained. Similarly in her English composing, Nik did not provide explicit and adequate reasons for having a dress code for teachers and students and a specific classroom environment that would support her position.

Like Nik, Mona also did not represent the rhetorical problem as effectively as the skilled writers had. Mona ignored her external audience whom she identified to be the bilingual Malay-English researcher with extensive knowledge of Malay culture. Subsequently, she was unable to carry out appropriate goal-oriented strategies to solve her rhetorical problem, resulting in arguments that were lacking important details that would have supported her position. This was evident in the translation of a paragraph from her Malay essay:

> "According to my perception, an ideal classroom is where students have mutual respect and tolerance for each other. The size of the class has to be small to facilitate communication between teachers and students. At the same time, teachers will not encounter problems of supervising their students. Student and teacher interaction is not restricted to matters pertaining to academic."

Clearly, Mona had a collection of ideas without a central unifying position. In fact, the paragraph resembles the writer's stream of consciousness, resulting in unelaborated ideas and inadequate logical support. The think-aloud data also indicated that process skills may be linked to the bilingual writers' willingness and/or ability to engage in perspective-taking and reflection. Skilled writers tended to evaluate their texts by

questioning their own assumptions against those of their readers. In the process of rebutting and accommodating these viewpoints, they constructed a more persuasive and audience-adapted text by employing elaborations and relevant details to support or explain their position. Less-skilled writers, on the other hand, often did not critically evaluate their own assumptions and frequently took for granted that their audience would understand them.

Additionally, the less skilled bilingual writers' task representation and lack of audience attention can be linked to their previous L1 training and experience. Nik stated that to write persuasively, she must support her position by using a lot of examples, use a variety of sentence structures, appropriate proverbs, and interesting words to capture the readers' interests. She explained that effective persuasion requires the writer to give "point by point explanations" and not by negotiating varying perspectives between the reader and the writer. She further elaborated in the interview protocol that in English persuasion, the writer is expected "to go straight to the point," whereas in Malay persuasion the writer can go around the point." Although this remark appears to be supportive of the position that accepts variations in culturally-specific rhetorical patterns, this conceptualization of what constitutes effective Malay rhetoric was not shared by the skilled writers Sara and Ana. Thus, Nik's rhetorical beliefs may have been an artifact of her developmental level as an intermediate level writer rather than something that was shaped by specific Malay rhetorical conventions.

Reports from the questionnaire revealed that Sara and Ana had extensive experience in multiple writing genres within the classroom and for their extracurricular social and academic clubs in both English and Malay; hence, they had written for a variety of audiences. In contrast, Nik and Mona's writing experiences were mostly confined to in-class assignments and essay exams for their teachers as audience. Additionally, writers' task perceptions may have also been shaped by what their previous teachers in Malaysia emphasized in grading. All four bilingual writers reported that both their Malay and English teachers tended to emphasize the beauty of language, use of a variety of sentence structures and attention-getter words, clarity of main ideas, use of good examples and credible expert opinions, and logical organization. However, they also reported that they largely wrote for the teacher in class-based assignments and examinations. Although this lack of attention to audience might be construed as supporting the claim of Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996) that some cultural rhetorical traditions may not conceptualize audience in ways valued by English rhetorical traditions, it should be recalled that the skilled writers Sara and Ana did not conform to a set Asian cultural pattern; in fact,

both skilled bilingual writers attended extensively to audience in both English and Malay.

The process and product results

The second research question asked whether there is a relationship between the composing process and quality of persuasive texts. Table 3 presents the bilingual writers' holistic scores in Malay and English essays in two parts. Part I assessed whether the writing had a clearly stated position supported by appropriate and adequate reasons. Part II assessed text coherence, use of a variety of syntactic structures, use of clear, reflective words, and mechanics. Table 3 also includes descriptors of the writing-process skill of each writer in both Malay and English tasks, their levels of English proficiency based on the TOEFL and TWE scores, and their writing experience.

Table 3: Overview of Process and Product Evaluations

WRITERS	AUDIENCE AWARENESS		HOLISTIC SCORES (ARGUMENTATION)		HOLISTIC SCORES (LANGUAGE)		ENGLISH PROFICIENCY LEVEL	L1 WRITING EXPERIENCE
	L1	L2	L1	L2	L1	L2		
Sara	Skilled	Skilled	3	3.5	3	3.5	Advanced	Experience with multiple genres in and out of the class
Ana	Skilled	Skilled	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	Advanced	Experience with multiple genres in and out of the class
Nik	Less Skilled	Less skilled	2.5	2.5	3	2.5	Intermediate	Classroom experience only
Mona	Less skilled	Less skilled	2.0	2.5	3	2.5	Intermediate	Classroom experience only

Table 3 suggests a strong relationship between process and product in L1 and L2 writing. All skilled writers were ranked the highest in developing logical arguments in English and Malay by scoring 1 to 1.5 levels higher than their less skilled counterparts. In addition, skilled writers who were judged as having high levels of English proficiency were also ranked the highest in the language component of the English essay by scoring

a full level higher than their less skilled counterparts. As can be seen in table 3, high levels of process skills also appear to be related to self-reports of high levels of L1 writing experience in multiple genres in and outside of the classroom.

Although all four bilingual writers have comparable holistic scores for the language component in the Malay writing task, the less skilled holistic scores for argumentation were significantly lower than those of the skilled writers. This evidence suggests that composing competence, especially in gearing message to audience in the context of the discourse situation, differentiates the more skilled and less skilled writers in L1 writing, a finding that is consistent with those found in previous L1 composing studies. The process for L2 writing, however, is more complex than that of L1. Unlike L1 writers, L2 writers have diverse educational, linguistic, and literacy experiences. Hence, the levels of success in L2 writing hinges on both composing and linguistic competence. In the case of this study, the less skilled writers did not have effective composing strategies in their L1, and were therefore, unable to transfer their home language composing skills to their L2. In addition, their relatively unskilled L2 writing performance was further exacerbated by their lack of linguistic proficiency, which was supported by their proficiency levels on the TOEFL and TWE. Although test scores should not be viewed as the final arbiter of global language proficiency and writing proficiency in particular, they can be used as indicators of their developmental level of English proficiency at a given point in time.

CONCLUSIONS

The most significant finding of this study is that writers exhibited consistent use of strategy in composing their L1 and L2 texts, a finding that concurs with previous research (Arndt, 1987; Cumming, 1989, Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Eldesky, 1982; Pennington & So, 1993). Skilled writers were successful at coordinating and managing the cognitive and linguistic demands of persuasive writing in both languages. They could represent the rhetorical problem, had strategic awareness to meet their rhetorical goals, and did not adhere to their plans or initial purpose in a rigid manner as the less skilled writers did. Skilled writers could handle audience concerns and consider more perspectives with regard to their rhetorical problem than their less skilled counterparts. In the process, they developed more sophisticated thinking on the writing topic through constant inferences of their audience and their anticipated response and evaluation of their arguments and assumptions against their readers' imagined position. Conversely, less skilled writers were further constrained by their limited linguistic ability in

English and difficulty in problem-finding and problem-solving. Hence, they were unable to move between "knowledge-telling" and "knowledge-transforming" processes (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1987) readily employed by expert writers. They did not write their text to an external audience other than themselves, much less put their arguments to evaluation and reflection.

Clearly, the four bilingual writers did not behave as a single cultural entity. They did not conform to stereotypical notions of how "Asian" or "Malaysian" writers compose, with the inherent negative implications implied in the dichotomization of Asian and Western rhetorical patterns. Like many other bilingual writers, these four Malay writers varied in their L2 proficiency levels, L1 educational experiences and use of audience-related strategies. This finding was consistent with the claims of Zamel (1997), Spack (1997) and Kubota (1999) that L2 writers are diverse in developmental levels and do not easily fit into fixed cultural groups as writers. Furthermore,. the home culture of the Malay writers may have positively impacted the composing processes of one skilled writer who used her sense of "face" (*air muka*) to intuit the reactions of two potentially adversarial cultural groups in her audience, thereby allowing her to tailor her arguments to avoid a face-threatening situation.

This study also raises the question of the notion of audience. The audience invoked by the skilled writers is borne out of the perceived rhetorical situation in the writing tasks and might or might not represent an actual reader. Their perceived disposition of an evolving audience that is at first neutral to one that may be potentially adversarial to their views prompted them to question their ideas and the strength of their arguments. Also, skilled writers possessed a "chameleon-like" readiness (Roth, 1987, p. 50) by projecting their own best selves onto their audience and sometimes blended with their potential readers. Their ability to maintain a flexible audience could reduce some of the perceived constraints imposed by audience in text development which may be the prerequisite to re-reading one's own text successfully. Less skilled writers, on the contrary, were less capable of intuiting audience characteristics in relation to their discourse situation. Subsequently, they did not consider audience in an effective manner to help them address their rhetorical problem, a finding that is consistent with previous studies.

THEORETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

One of the major theoretical and educational implications of this study is the intersection among linguistic, cognitive, and cultural factors that influence the bilingual writers' approaches

to composing. By comparing the writers' composing processes in terms of audience and product analysis, the study reveals the multifaceted notions of audience and how they are manifested in specific rhetorical moves and conventions in L1 and L2. A second implication is that if bilingual ESL teachers are aware of which audience-related strategies are associated with skilled writers, then these strategies can be explicitly modeled and taught, thus apprenticing less skilled L2 writers into a new English discourse community in general (Kubota, 1999) and into new discourse communities specific to each discipline in particular (Ramanathan & Kaplan,1996). A final implication would be that the home culture of bilingual L2 writers should not be viewed as a negative, inhibiting factor in L2 writing. While certain cultural differences will impact how its members write in English (Dyc, 2002; Kubota, 1999), drawing upon the L1 culture can enrich the composing processes of bilingual writers by allowing the writers to view audiences and issues from multiple perspectives, an important skill in critical literacy and academic writing.

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ENDNOTE

[1] Malay and its sister language Indonesian are the first or additional languages of over 220 million people in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand.

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